

Insider's view of voting on the Oscars

Perspectives of Dr. Neil Goldstein

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The Oscars, also known as the Academy Awards, have long been an event for Hollywood to recognize its biggest and brightest stars for their accomplishments. Celebrities walk the red carpet, while millions of viewers watch on television. However, many people do not know the process for judging films, nor do they understand how hard it is for people's talents to be recognized within the film industry.

In an interview with the Montgazette, Dr. Neil Goldstein, a retired Montgomery County Community College Communication professor and voting member of the Directors Guild of America since the late 1980s, shined a light on how the award season and its shows operate.

For beginners, in early January, the DGA posts its awards just before Oscar nominations are announced by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Choices of these two groups are often aligned. Goldstein explained how the guild operates and how it is similar to other guilds. To be a member of the Directors Guild, one must direct a film and submit an application. Then, that application must be approved by a council. Membership in the guild equires a lifetime of hard work and dedication. There are 17,000 members in the DGA.

New York and Hollywood, the producing companies have contracts

with guilds and unions, and the Directors Guild is a major guild. The DGA fights for good wages and basic working conditions for its members.

Goldstein said, "The biggest benefit of being a voting member of the Directors Guild is you get to participate in sponsorship events, and [vote] for different award shows in film and TV."

The DGA also fights for protections that offset the power of producers. One of the ways this is done is through a director's cut.

"On top of the producing industries in television, the Television Academy supports the Emmy Awards, Goldstein remarked, "In the Directors Guild, when you are watching the movies, it's a director's cut; the producers make the changes if it's in a contract, but it's all up to how the director wants it."

Thus, it is important to realize voters for the award shows may see additional scenes that may sway their votes. The director's cut is the version of the film that is supposed to represent the director's vision for the film. Unlike in the theatrical version shown to audiences, producers and studios will not make changes to make a film less ambiguous or give the film a happy ending to increase profit. The director's cut is purely the director's vision. As Goldstein explains, "In this business, creativity is the skill needed to succeed."

As an avid supporter of film, Goldstein pays an extraordinary amount of attention to the Oscars show, not just the films.

As many readers may know, this year's Oscars experienced a huge controversy regarding the host. Kevin Hart was slated to host the awards ceremony. But, a series of homophobic tweets he posted between 2009 and 2011 surfaced. These tweets resulted in Hart stepping down after issuing an apology. The AMPAS did not find a host to replace him, resulting in the first hostless Oscars since 1989. The way the Academy operates is by its standards, and it is their choice to have another host or not.

The lack of a host for the Oscars led many to believe that the awards show would not succeed. Regardless, Dr. Goldstein felt that the Oscars went well.

"It was astounding to see that they pulled off the award show without a host," said Dr. Goldstein.

The Oscars has also come under fire in the past for a lack of diversity among its nominees and award winners. Award winners have featured mainly white directors, white actors, and white producers, with very little representation from minorities.

This year, however, the Academy did a better job of highlighting the work of minorities. The movie "Black Panther" was highly lauded and

nominated for Best Picture. "Black Panther" was awarded, and Soledad O'Neal won Best Director.

Dr. Goldstein said, "I've seen films like 'The Hate U Give' and 'Rich Asians' that both won Oscar nominations for Best Picture and Best Director."

I was disappointed that 'The Hate U Give' did not win. I told a wonderful story, and I felt that the movie was great. It does matter. What matters are recognized

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"Crazy F"

"Crazy F" is one of the best movies, and I was nominated for Best Asian myself. I felt that this movie was great and it was very important. Because of this, it became a home big hit and sold out in 10